

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

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NEAE-00 /074 W
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P R 181603Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3632
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T BELGRADE 8173

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL XF
SUBJECT: REPRESENTATIONS TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR SADAT

REF: STATE 276546

1. I PRESENTED OUR VIEWS IN SUPPORT OF SADAT INITIATIVE TO FSFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY BERNARDIC NOVEMBER 18. IN ADDITION TO RELATING IN DETAIL POSITIONS CONTAINED PARAS 2-6 OF REFTEL, I UNDERLINED THAT (1) WE DO NOT CONSIDER THIS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GENEVA, RATHER THAT THIS IMPROVES GENEVA'S PROSPECTS; (2) WE GREATLY HOPE OTHER COUNTRIES WILL DO WHAT THEY CAN TO SUPPORT SADAT AND (3) THIS IS ONE WAY TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS.

2. BERNARDIC EXPRESSED GOY'S "EXTREME" INTEREST IN SADAT'S INITIATIVE AND GENERAL SUPPORT FOR ANY STEP WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE DEEP CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. TWO PRINCIPLES GUIDED YUGOSLAVIA'S POLICIES (1) THAT ISRAEL SHOULD LEAVE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND (2) THAT ISRAEL SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO A NATIONAL STATE. YUGOSLAVIA

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HAS NEVER BEEN AGAINST DIRECT CONTACTS. THUS THIS STEP IMPLICITLY HAS GOY'S ENDORSEMENT. BUT IT CONSIDERS SADAT'S ACTION A DECISION OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. NOT ALL ARABS ENDORSE IT. IF ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE TWO KEY PRINCIPLES BOTH ISRAEL AND SADAT WILL BE CONGRATULATED. ISRAEL MUST RECOGNIZE THAT ARABS HAVE MADE A "WONDERFUL" EVOLUTION AWAY FROM POLICY OF NON-RECOGNITION OF

ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE, THAT SADAT IS DEMONSTRATING GREAT GOOD WILL, IN FACT THAT HE IS RISKING HIS POLITICAL LIFE. EVERYTHING NOW DEPENDS ON WHETHER ISRAEL EVALUATES THIS CORRECTLY AND IS FLEXIBLE WITH SADAT. OTHERWISE THIS COULD END TRAGICALLY.

3. TO MY SPECIFIC REQUEST THAT ALL WHO SHARE INTEREST IN MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE STAND BY SADAT AND EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT FOR HIM PUBLICLY, BERNARDIC DUCKED BY SAYING THAT SADAT HAD NOT COME TO THEM TO EXPLAIN HIS POSITION AND TO REQUEST THEIR SUPPORT. HE SAID THE GOY WAS PREPARED TO SUPPORT ALL MOVES TO PEACE IF THEY ARE GOVERNED BY THE PRINCIPLES HE HAD OUTLINED. TO MY STATEMENT THAT THE LAST THING THAT SADAT NEEDS NOW IS CRITICISM AND THAT HE MUST BE GIVEN A CHANCE, BERNARDIC SAID THAT HIS PRIVATE VIEW WAS THAT SADAT CONTACT WITH ISRAEL WAS A GOOD STEP.

4. NO ONE SHOULD HOLD THEIR BREATH WAITING FOR PUBLIC YUGOSLAV ENDORSEMENT OF SADAT'S COURAGEOUS ACTION. PRESS TO DATE HAS BEEN NEUTRAL TO SLIGHTLY NEGATIVE. WE EXPECT THAT GOY WILL CAREFULLY WATCH THE REACTIONS OF THE PLO AND SYRIA AND WILL AWAIT THE VISIT'S OUTCOME BEFORE TAKING VERY EXPLICIT OFFICIAL STAND.
EAGLEBURGER

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